laid down by Government, public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs) have laid down their respective guidelines for the selection of dealers for retail outlets (petrol pumps), etc., including that for the constitution of selection committees, for making selections of dealers and allotment of dealerships to the selected candidates. Selection of dealers for petrol pumps during the period 1st April, 2003 to 30th September, 2004 has been made in accordance with the guidelines.

In respect of 'A' site (company-owned) retail outlets, where land has already been acquired by the companies pending selection of dealers, oil companies usually take action to set up the retail outlets and start the operation in order to avoid loss in keeping the facilities idle and to ensure that the consumers do not suffer. Such outlets are operated by the companies on a company-owned-company-operated (COCO)/ad hoc basis till the selection of regular dealers is completed and the outlets are handed over to the selected dealers. 1242 retail outlets were commissioned on a COCO/ad hoc basis by the OMCs during the period 1st April, 2003 to 30th September, 2004.

Impact of Ethanol Blended Petrol

2010. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the status of the ethanol-doped petrol, a green fuel, launched by Government;

(b) in what manner it would help to lessen the demand of petrol;

(c) whether it has been introduced in some States; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and its impact?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (d) With a view to giving a boost to the agriculture sector and reducing environmental pollution, a decision was taken by the Government in September, 2002, that, with effect from 1.1.2003, only 5% ethanol blended petrol shall be sold in notified States and Union Territories. Blending of ethanol in petrol reduces consumption of petrol to the extent of ethanol blended in petrol.

However, due to difficulties relating to taxation issues at State level and inconsistent availability of ethanol the programme was taken up in a phased manner. Further, due to continuous difficulties in sourcing ethanol consistently at reasonable prices, Gazette Notification No. 705(E) dated 27.10.2004 was issued. In terms of the notification, as long as the prices of ethanol are competitive and reasonable, and supply of ethanol is adequate, the oil marketing companies are statutorily required to lift the same and supply the ethanol blended petrol in notified areas. The areas which have been notified are the States of Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Andhra Pradesh (all districts except Chittoor and Nellore), Tamil Nadu (only districts Coimbatore, Dindigul, Erode, Kanyakumari, Nilgiri, Ramanathpuram, Tirunelveli, Tuticorin, and Virudhunagar), and the Union Territories of Chandigarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu.

The oil marketing companies have decided to invite tenders for procuring ethanol in terms of the Gazette notification dated 27.10.2004.

Subsidy on diesel to farmers

2011. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering of giving subsidy on diesel to farmers;

(b) if so, by when a decision is likely to be taken; and

(c) the amount of subsidy proposed to be given?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) The issue regarding providing relief to farmers using diesel pump sets for irrigation is under examination of the Government.

Planting of Pongomia and Jatropha Trees

2012. SHRI LEKHRAJ BACHANI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of successful experiment of